

Disney Dumped

An environmental battle which has waged for more than a decade was laid to rest last week when the House of Representatives approved an omnibus parks measure in which the scenic Mineral King Valley was added to Sequoia National Park.

Walt Disney Productions had planned to develop some 16,000 acres in the Mineral King area as a major Western ski resort, but after the House action, a Disney official was quoted as saying, "It looks like the end of the road."

We are glad. It was a road we did not wish to travel.

Among other provisions the House bill includes a prohibition against downhill ski facilities in Mineral King, which is in line with the general Park Service policy.

However, the bill as written does not prevent certain small-scale recreational developments. It simply calls for a sensible approach to an area which must be protected from the ravages of overdevelopment.

We recognize the increasing need for new recreational areas as our state's population continues to grow. We cannot, however, afford to consume our precious wilderness areas to meet this need.

Now, chances are that the area will be developed for low-impact uses. One suggestion is to develop trailheads into other nearby wilderness areas.

Whatever path is finally chosen for Mineral King, we hope it will be a sensible one. We'd hate to reach "the end of the road" and find one of the finest areas in the state laid to waste by overdevelopment.

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